

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 AMMAN 03592 201212Z

ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5827

S E C R E T AMMAN 3592

NODIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS IMMEDIATE TO SECRETARY AND ASSISTANT
SECRETARY SAUNDERS

E.O.11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PEPR, PDIP, JO, US, XF, OVIP (KING HUSSEIN)

SUBJECT: PROPOSED HUSSEIN VISIT

REF: STATE 101041

1. AFTER CONSIDERABLE SOUL SEARCHING, I BELIEVE I
MUST DELAY DELIVERY OF YOUR REPLY TO HUSSEIN'S REQUEST
FOR A VISIT BECAUSE TO DELIVER IT IN THIS FORM WOULD
CAUSE SERIOUS HARM TO OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JIM. I
RECOGNIZE, AS I AM SURE HE WILL, THAT PRESIDENT CARTER
HAS AN EXTREMELY FULL SCHEDULE. NEVERTHELESS, THE
FAILURE TO SUGGEST ALTERNATIVE DATES, A STEP FOLLOWED IN
ALL PREVIOUS CASES OF A REQUEST BY KING HUSSEIN FOR A
U.S. VISIT THAT I KNOW OF, WILL BE TAKEN BY HIM, WHATEVER
WE SAY, AS A SERIOUS SLIGHT AND AN EFFORT TO PUT HIM OFF
INDEFINITELY.

2. THE FOLLOWING FACTORS SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND IN
THIS REGARD:

(A) HUSSEIN, FOR GOOD OR ILL, HAS BECOME A KEY TIE
BREAKER IN THE MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS. BOTH SADAT AND
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BEGIN WANT HIM IN (BOTH ADMITTEDLY UNDER QUITE DIFFERENT
CONDITIONS) TO HELP RESOLVE THE KEY QUESTION OF THE WEST
BANK. TO A MODERATE SITTING ON AN ESSENTIAL PIECE OF
GEOGRAPHY IN THE MIDDLE EAST EQUATION, WE SHOULD AVOID
THO OFFENSE WHICH I FEEL HE WILL SENSE IN THIS REPLY.
HE WILL ALSO ASSUME ONCE AGAIN THAT OUR NATIONAL PRIORITY
ON THIS ISSUE IS RHETORICAL AND NOT SUBSTANTIAL, CLEARLY

AN IMPRESSION WE SHOULD AVOID. THE KEY WILL BE A SUGGESTION OF ALTERNATIVE DATES, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THOSE WHICH HE HAS REQUESTED, AS TO WHEN HE CAN SEE THE PRESIDENT.

(B) HUSSEIN WENT TO TEHRAN JANUARY 1, 1978 AT THE PRESIDENT'S REQUEST AT A TIME AND PLACE WHICH SUITED US. WHILE HE WAS PLEASED TO SEE THE PRESEIDENT, HE WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE PREFERRED WASHINGTON.

(C) FAILURE TO SET AN ALTERNATIVE DATE NOW WILL FURTHER SHAKE HIS CONFIDENCE IN THE EACE EFFORT. AS YOU KNOW, HE CONSIDERS OUR ROLE ESSENTIAL. IF WE APPEAR TO BE IGNORING HIM OR PUTTING HIM OFF, COUPLED WITH HIS GROWING CONCERN OVER HIS OWN MILITARY WEAKNESS (WHICH WE WILL BE ADDRESSING IN MORE DETAIL SHORTLY), WE WILL ONLY SPEED UP HIS PRESENT FLIRTATION WITH LIBYA AND IRAQ AND PROBABLY HELP TO PUT FURTHER STRAIN ON HIS RELATIONS WITH THE SAUDIS AND THE EGYPTIANS. WHILE NONE OF THIS IS NECESSARILY LOGICAL ON HIS PART, THIS IS STILL THE ARAB WORLD WHERE THE PERSONAL EQUATION IN POLITICS IS QUINTESSENTIAL.

(D) FINALLY, KING HAS TAKEN GREAT PRIDE IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH PRESIDENT CARTER WHICH HE SEES PERSONALLY AS BEING OVER AND ABOVE THE LINGERING IDEA OF A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. HE HAS NEVER REFUSED OR INDEED ASKED US TO CHANGE A HIGH LEVEL VISIT HERE. HE HAS IN THE LAST YEAR ACCOMMODATED
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WILLINGLY TO REQUESTS FOR CHANGES IN DATES AND EXTENSIONS OF STAY BY THE SECRETARY. IF I GO TO HUSSEIN WITH YOUR MESSAGE IN ITS PRESENT FORM, IT WILL BE A REAL EGO BRUISER FOR AN ARAB WHOSE STANDARDS OF HOSPITALITY AND PRIDE IN IT ARE TRADITIONAL AND ARE PROJECTED INTO OUR WORLD AS WELL. IN MANY WAYS AN ARAB WOULD FIND IT NEARLY UNTHINKABLE TO ACT IN A WAY WHICH COULD BE INTERPRETED AS REFUSING THE REQUEST OF EVEN AN ENEMY TO MEET WITH HIM, TO SAY NOTHING OF A CLOSE FRIEND.

3. IN SUM, I NEED SOME ALTERNATIVE DATE OR DATES TO ROUND OUT YOUR MESSAGE TO HUSSEIN, THE NEARER TO THE DATES ORIGINALLY PROJECTED BY HUSSEIN THE BETTER. GIVEN OUR COMMITMENT TO SOLVING THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM, HUSSEIN'S IMPORTANT ROLE IN IT, I BELIEVE THIS IS THE MINIMUM NECESSARY TO INSURE THE PRESIDENT'S RELATIONS WITH HIM AND OUR IMPORTANT INTERESTS IN JORDAN ARE PROTECTED FROM SERIOUS HARM.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: AN ALTERNATIVE DATE OR DATES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. HUSSEIN LEAVES FOR YUGOSLAVIA ON OR ABOUT TUESDAY, APRIL 25, AND WE SHOULD HAVE DATES TO HIM

WITH YOUR MESSAGE BY THAT TIME.
PICKERING

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NNN

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